GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1369
ANSWERED ON:10.03.2008
TESTS ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS
Patil Smt. Rupatai Diliprao Nilangekar

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any tests have been conducted on the viability and safety of the genetically modified (GM) seeds developed in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the outcome thereof;

(c) whether the Government has chalked out any action plan for certification of the said GM seeds and their use in view of the protests made in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE(SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) The Ministry of Environment and Forests and Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology being the nodal departments informed that they have not conducted any test on viability of genetically modified (GM) seeds. However, the safety tests on the GM seeds developed in the country are conducted as per the guidelines and protocols put in place by the Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) and any tests prescribed by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC).

(b) So far, the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has approved the environmental release of only Bt cotton. The biosafety tests conducted on Bt cotton seeds having events MON531 (Cry-1 Ac gene), MON15985 (Cry-1 Ac+Cry 2Ab Gene), JK Event 1 (Cry-1 Ac Gene) and GFM (Cry-1 A Gene) have been found to be safe.

(c) and (d) : The Genetically Modified (GM) seeds are not notified as they are not covered under the Seeds Act, 1966. In view of the above facts, the GM seeds including Bt cotton seeds cannot be certified under the present circumstances. However, the purpose of certification is only to ensure seed quality and not bio-safety.